Participant Complaint Handling Policy

Purpose

As a participant at Bus Stop Films, you have the right to a supportive, inclusive, and positive learning environment. This policy outlines how you can raise concerns or grievances and how they will be addressed.

The purpose of this policy is to provide:

- Guidance on the participant complaints and appeals process
- A procedure for reviewing and investigating issues
- A transparent, confidential and equitable way to resolve complaints and appeals

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and enrolled participants of Bus Stop Films (BSF) involved in attending, delivering, participating and/or offering BSF programs.

The services of third party providers (for example Film Crew) who have been licensed through BSF are not covered by this policy. Please refer to the relevant provider's policies (where applicable).

General Principles
BSF will act in accordance with these principles when managing investigations, complaints and appeals:

- All complaints are treated seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.
- BSF seeks to resolve complaints as soon as reasonably practicable
- BSF will not act in a way that penalises or disadvantages any participant who has raised a complaint
- The information provided in a complaint must be kept confidential by all participants and their parents/carers/representatives, unless otherwise required by law.
- Investigations of complaints will be conducted in a fair, ethical and efficient manner.
- During the process of reviewing any complaint, a complainant may continue to participate in their program as per usual except in circumstances where BSF determines it is not appropriate for them to do so.

- Participants involved in a complaints process are invited to have a support person to provide emotional support during any meetings or interviews they attend.
- The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify any participant's rights under Australian laws, or their rights to pursue other legal remedies.

Procedures for Lodging a Complaint

After a participant complaint is received, it may be addressed through various avenues as appropriate:

1. Informal resolution;
2. Formal processes of investigation and review; and
3. Appeals.

Types of Complaints

Informal Complaints

A complaint can be made verbally or in a written form. Where a complaint is not severe or complex in nature, it can usually be resolved relatively quickly. Participants are encouraged to raise their concerns as soon as the issue or incident occurs.

In the first instance, and where appropriate, participants are encouraged to approach their Workshop Leader or in-workshop Support Worker if they would like to express a concern.

For example:

Participant A would like to change workshops as they are not happy with their Workshop Leader. Participant A approaches their Workshop Leader or in-workshop Support Worker to express their concerns. The Support Worker or Workshop Leader is able to understand Participant's A concerns and provides a resolution without the need to change workshops.

Formal Complaints

Please use the formal process if the informal process was ineffective or the complaint is of a more serious nature. Participants can raise their concerns by reaching out to our Support & Engagement Manager at SupportManager@busstopfilms.com.au or complete the Participant Complaint form.

Please return the complaint form to: hello@busstopfilms.com.au

OR post to:

Bus Stop Films
Attn: Chief Operating Officer
86-88 Carlton Parade
Carlton NSW 2066

A participant may have assistance from a support person to complete the form, which can be found **here**.

For example:

Participant A writes to the Support Worker that they are being excluded from program activities by a Workshop Leader for no reason despite discussing these concerns with the Workshop Leader previously. This complaint will be escalated for investigation by someone other than the Workshop Leader.

BSF aims to acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 48 hours. If you do not receive an acknowledgement of your complaint within 48 hours of it being made, please contact dianna@busstopfilms.com.au to ensure your complaint has been received.

More serious complaints may require other processes to be undertaken before a resolution is reached including, but not limited to:

- Investigation conducted internally or externally
- Disciplinary processes
- Police report
- Report to a statutory body or regulator

Investigation

When investigations will be undertaken

Investigations may be undertaken by an appropriate person at BSF (such as a member of the Executive). The need for an investigation into an event or incident may be prompted by a complaint or report or at BSF's own discretion and initiative.

Investigation procedure

When undertaking an investigation, the investigator will:

- Contact the complainant is to be contacted in a timely manner
- Liaise with BSF to determine the appropriate process including an indication of the time it may take to investigate.
- Ensure that procedural fairness is provided to all parties
- Speak with people who may have information relevant to the complaint, including the

person who is the subject of the complaint

The investigator will usually advise the person who is the subject of the complaint, of the complaint and its basis. If BSF or the investigator considers that, in the circumstances, it is not appropriate to immediately speak with that person or that to do so has the potential to adversely affect the interests of the complainant, the investigator will consult a member of the BSF Executive team, regarding the appropriate next steps.

When the outcome of the investigation into the complaint has been finalised the complainant will be notified that the investigation is complete. In appropriate cases the complainant will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Investigations and materials gathered in the course of investigations are confidential.

Potential outcomes

The appropriate decision maker at BSF will determine the appropriate course of action to handle the specific situation based on the investigator's findings.

If it is determined an employee has engaged in a breach of BSF policy, unlawful conduct or misconduct, BSF may consider taking disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

If it is determined a participant has acted contrary to the Participant Handbook and depending on the nature of the conduct, BSF may consider action up to and including expulsion from BSF programs.

Appeals procedure

If a complainant is not satisfied with an investigation or outcome of their complaint, they may lodge an appeal. Any appeal must be received within 14 calendar days of the date on which BSF notifies the complainant that their complaint has been finalised.

Participants should complete the Notice of Appeals form, which can be found here.

Appeals will only proceed for full review where the any of following apply:

- The appellant provides new evidence relevant to the original complaint and this would have materially affected the original outcome or decision; and/or
- The appellant can demonstrate that the original outcome or decision did not consider all of the relevant facts, evidence or circumstances originally presented with the complaint or which came to light during the investigation; and/or
- An irregularity occurred within the investigation process that has materially affected the original outcome or decision reached.

Should a Notice of Appeal meet the above criteria it will be reviewed by the Bus Stop Films Board. After review, the Board may confirm the original outcome, or make any other different determination as it sees fit.

The original decision maker will not be a decision-maker in any related appeal process.

Any decision by the Board is final and binding.

The participant may, at any time, seek further information from external bodies regarding other remedies available to them under Commonwealth or State legislation.

Indicative resolution timeframes

Type of Resolution	Complaint raised by Participant or Staff	Indicative BSF Response Timeframe
Informal	As soon as possible after the incident or concern occurs.	Acknowledgement of receipt of complaint generally within 48 hours. Resolution ideally within 1-2 weeks.
Formal (including an investigation)	As soon as possible after the incident or concern occurs.	Acknowledgement of receipt of complaint generally within 48 hours. Resolution ideally within 2-3 weeks however it will vary depending on the nature of the complaint.
Appeals	Notice of Appeal to be submitted within 14 calendar days of the date of the original outcome or decision.	Resolution ideally within 2 weeks however it will vary depending on the nature of the complaint.

Record keeping

BSF will keep a confidential record of complaints and appeals received including the process undertaken and outcome provided.

A separate internal register used for continuous improvement and enhancements to our programs, staff and processes will only provide BSF with de-identified information from

complaint resolution processes.

All personal information retained is kept in strict confidence and in alignment with our Privacy policy.

Date of policy	3 April 2025
Version	Version 2
Responsible Person	Laura Imbruglia